

# Audit of the key DTI project Schengen/Dublin further development

General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Justice and Police

## Key points

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With the Schengen and Dublin (S/D) Agreements, the European Union (EU) aims to increase the security of its external borders and simplify co-operation between member states in the areas of justice, police, borders, visas and asylum. The EU continually adapts the original agreements and implementing decisions on S/D to the latest situation. In order to implement the European Agenda on Security, new legal bases are being drawn up and existing ones modified. Switzerland has been part of the S/D area since 2008 and is therefore obliged to implement the changes at national level.

Information systems are also affected by the changes. In Switzerland, new information systems are being set up and existing systems modernised between 2019 and 2025. The General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (GS-FDJP) is implementing these changes with the key DTI project "Schengen/Dublin further development".

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the further development programme for the first time in 2020.<sup>4</sup> In this second audit, the programme was assessed with regard to risks and the achievement of objectives. In addition, the implementation of three recommendations from the initial audit was evaluated.

The audit found that the project is highly dependent on the EU's planning. Due to its re-scheduling, it was apparent at the time of the audit that the programme would be postponed and consequently extended until 2027. The further development programme is responding appropriately to the latest postponements and is well managed. The availability requirements for the S/D applications are high and evidence that they are met still needs to be provided.

### **Funding is secure despite the foreseeable programme extension**

A guarantee credit of CHF 98.7 million was approved for the further development programme by federal decree on 11 June 2020. In addition, a supplementary credit of CHF 22.7 million was requested with the 2023 budget. This increased the guarantee credit to CHF 121.4 million.

As at 31 December 2023, expenditure amounted to CHF 38.8 million. Due to delays on the part of the EU affecting the further development programme, the GS-FDJP set aside reserves of around CHF 36 million, of which CHF 23 million is earmarked. According to the programme's current requirements planning, the financial resources will suffice until the end of the programme.

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<sup>4</sup> "Audit of the Schengen/Dublin further development key ICT project" (audit mandate 20403), available on the SFAO website.

### **EU requirements will be implemented on schedule**

The S/D Association Agreements between Switzerland and the EU have been in force since the end of 2008. The EU notifies Switzerland of any changes. The notified requirements are examined in the respective projects from a technological, organisational and legal perspective, and must be implemented within two years.

Any amendments to the law must be approved by Parliament, even though Switzerland has undertaken to adopt the further developments.

### **The availability of applications and information protection must be ensured**

The requirements for the availability and information protection of S/D applications are very high. The EU requirements are being introduced with the implementation of a regional concept and the development of the necessary architecture. However, the actual proof that the required availability is in place still has to be provided through the planned tests.

In addition, there is currently no holistic business continuity process across all organisations that enables business processes to be quickly managed and maintained in the event of an incident. The current BCM processes were primarily defined per application by the specialist departments.

### **Enterprise architecture management is being set up**

The FDJP has started a project to implement the vision and the target image of the enterprise architecture (EAM). Various application aids have been developed. FDJP projects are now invited to utilise and further develop these.

Real added value beyond the Federal Administration will be created by involving other authorities in the development and enabling them to use the defined tools and aids seamlessly.

### **Reporting to Parliament has potential for improvement**

Despite the recommendation from the initial audit, there are still shortcomings in reporting to Parliament. For example, it was not possible to reconcile the actual costs as at 30 June 2023 and the milestone planning dates differ from the information in the internal steering instruments.

In addition, the reports reflected only the portion of the investments that were released with the federal decree of 4 September 2019 concerning the dispatch on the guarantee credit for the further development of the S/D acquis. The Federal Council defined this scope in its decision of 10 April 2019. This meant previously approved guarantee credits were not included in the report. As a result, the report only provided a partial picture.

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